1: Kroeber E-5 (1901) 1908
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places. Beginning at the eastern opening of the circle, and going southward, westward, northward, and eastward again, the order in which the clans camped was as follows:—

1. Frozen, or plumes.
2. Those-who-water-their-horses-once-a-day.
3. Tendons.
4. Those-who-do-not-give-away, or buffalo-humps.
5. Opposite (or middle) Assiniboine.
6. Ugly-ones, or tent-poles worn smooth (from travel).
7. Bloods.
8. Fighting-alone.

Other names of clans, whose location in the camp-circle was not ascertained, and some of which, perhaps, are second names of clans enumerated above, are:—

Dusty-ones.
Coffee.
Weasel-skin head-dress.
Ka'hutyi (the name of a chief).
Poor-ones.
Berry-eaters.
Torn-trousers.
Gray-ones, or ash-colored.
Breech-cloths.
Night-hawks.

Anecdotes referring to incidents that are usually ridiculous accompany these names. The Smooth-worn-tent-pole people were so called, because the ends of their tent-poles, used as travois, were worn smooth from much travelling. The Tendon clan was so called, because one of this band had said that the tendons in the neck of a buffalo were good eating. The Frozen-people were so called, because, when they had hungry visitors in winter, they gave them frozen meat. Those-who-water-their-horses-once-a-day are said to have followed this practice so that their horses would gain flesh more quickly. The Opposite-Assiniboine, like the Assiniboine, were said to have had few horses, and the Fighting-alone were very warlike people. Those-who-do-not-give-away-without-return were considered stingy, and the Ugly-people were said not to have painted their faces.

FOOD AND HUNTING.

Like most of the other tribes of the Plains, the Gros Ventre subsisted almost entirely on the buffalo, and their culture depended to the usual degree upon this animal. The following scattering notes were obtained regarding the hunting of buffalo and other animals.

Buffalo enclosures used to be made of trees and forked limbs set in the ground in a half or three-quarter circle below a vertical bank. Extending over the country above the bank, a long chute of two rows of stone monuments was erected, behind which sat men. Other hunters drove the buffalo into the chute. Those behind the piles of stone rose up as the buffalo

l: Kroeber E-5 (1901) 1908
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passed, and so drove them forward over the bank into the enclosure. After horses were secured, the buffalo were generally run down. It is said that a buffalo shot with an arrow fell to the other side, never breaking the arrow by falling upon it.

The meat of an entire buffalo would be carried on a horse. It was cut in small pieces, which were tied to the ends of strips of the skin and then slung over the horse's back so as to balance. If necessary, the hunter would mount above. It is said that sometimes as many as four deer were carried on one horse.

When a buffalo was killed, half the skin was sometimes stitched or tied into a sack, the meat put into it, and the bundle dragged home by a rope around the shoulders of a person. In other cases the meat would be tied into bundles and carried home on the shoulders. The buffalo were usually cut up by men. Women were said to have taken part in this work when luck was unusually good and many buffalo had been killed. After a man had brought home meat, the women cut it into thin slices, which were hung on racks to dry. The dried meat was either packed in parfleches, or pounded fine and made into pemmican by mixture with berries. Meat, whether fresh or dried, was usually eaten after having been boiled in water; but when one was hungry or in haste a piece would be put on a stick and turned over the fire.

Traps for foxes and other animals, even bears, were constructed by making an enclosure, over the opening of which a heavy log, sliding between four sticks to keep it in place, was supported on a single slender upright stick resting on another stick attached to the bait. Other logs might be leaned against the first one to give it additional weight.

Birds such as sage-hens, ducks, and geese, were formerly not hunted extensively. The eggs, however, formed favorite food. When a camp was pitched near a lake, the young men would strip and go out into the water looking for duck-eggs. Fish were not caught except by children, for amusement.

When a camp was broken, small brush tents with windows of grass were built. Fat and meat were strewed about the place and a man entered the ambush before daylight. He could look and shoot through the grass, but he could not be seen inside. Birds as large as eagles were secured in this way.

Crows and magpies were caught with sinew snares attached to a willow hoop. Meat was laid in the middle of the hoop. Walking about inside of this, the birds caught their feet in the snares and were unable to fly away.

Gophers were caught by means of a horsehair loop fastened to the end of a rope and laid around a gopher-hole. A person lay down, and when the gopher raised its head he jerked the rope.

1: Kroeber E-5 (1901) 1908
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526 Fig. 25 shows one side of a small ball painted yellow, on which is a rude
532 embroidery in red, yellow, and green quills, representing a bird. On the opposite side is a red quilled cross. The bird-embroidery recalls the quill-ornamentation of an Arapaho ghost-dance drumstick and hand implement, both of them with stuffed heads of painted skin; also the painting of a crow on an Arapaho ghost-dance ball.[1]

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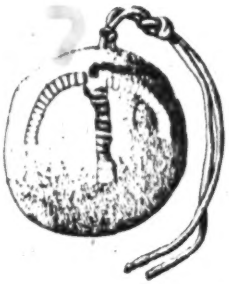

Fig. 25 (50-1731). Embroidered and Painted Ball. Diameter, 7 cm.

A game of throwing willow sticks on the ice, to see who could slide them furthest, was played by women. These sticks were sometimes tipped with buffalo-calves' horns. Young men, as well as women, sometimes threw horn-pointed sticks on the ice. It is said that women used long sticks, young men short sticks.

Children slid on the ice at a place they had made smooth. A boy and then a girl would slide alternately. When the whole party had slid one way, they would return, sliding in the opposite direction.

A toy made to slide on the ice consists of a bone to which two feathered sticks are attached at a diverging angle. It is called "tataxtsitcebya^{n}." The object is to bounce or slide the implement over the ice as far as possible. This type of object is found among a number of Plains tribes.

493 Boys' sleds for coasting on hillsides were made of
526 several buffalo-ribs held together at each end by a long
857 thong winding in and out around the two halves of a split stick. A buffalo-tail was tied behind. These sleds were called "sö^{n}w^{u}haana^{n}." When a man presented such a sled to another man's boy, he received presents from the boy's parents. In early summer, when the grass was green, toboggans of rawhide were used on the hillsides. The front was held up and bent over, and the bottom soon became very smooth.

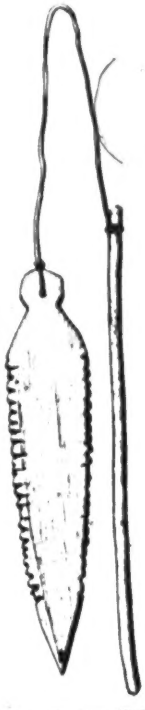

Fig. 26 (50-1788). Bull-roarer. Length, 56 cm.

224 Slings were used by boys for killing birds and small animals. The entire
411 sling was made of skin. The thongs were passed through holes near the
857

[1] See Bulletin of the American Museum of Natural History, Vol. XVIII, Part IV, p. 395, Fig. 151.

1: Kroeber E-5 (1901) 1908
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ends of the main portion of the sling, and then looped on themselves through a slit near one end.

The bull-roarer and buzzer were both well known to the Gros Ventre, but seem to be only children's toys. They were both called nakaa"ta" ("making cold," a name given also to the thermometer), probably from the widespread Indian idea that the bull-roarer breeds wind. The buzzer was made of a foot-bone of a buffalo, with a sinew string on each side, by which it was twirled, and then drawn so as to hum. The Arapaho type of buzzer is the same. The Gros Ventre bull-roarer seems to differ from the Arapaho form. Fig. 20 shows one of two very similar models, both of wood. The small, well-marked head, the long taper and point, and the numerous small notches, mark a distinct form. The sinew string is of about the length of the stick handle.

WAR.

Men generally went to war on foot, carrying food and moccasins on their backs. While on the trip they did not boil meat, but roasted it. Scouts, called "wolves," were sent out ahead. When these returned, running in a zigzag course, and shouting, it was a sign that they had seen something. If they had seen lodges, they barked like wolves. While they came, the women in the party stood in a row and sang, having made a pile of buffalo-chips. The "wolves" stopped a short distance away, and the leader of the party went to them. They came with him back to the pile of buffalo-chips, where he stopped, and, facing the party, recounted coups. After this, one of the scouts came before them and reported what he had seen. Upon this, all rushed at the pile of buffalo-chips, and kicked them about. If the enemy were near, they would now take off their heavier clothing, such as their robes, and dress and paint for war.

On returning to their camp victorious, the party approached stealthily, and made a charge upon it, often shooting; and sometimes the people in the tents jumped up out of their sleep in the early morning, thinking they had been attacked. The man who had killed an enemy, the one who had struck him first (whether dead or alive), and the one who had taken his gun, were held in about the same esteem. After the return to camp, a dance was made. Drums were beaten; and the women, who were standing in a curved row, danced in a circle toward the men, who stood in a row, and back again. The women carried the new scalps on sticks. If an enemy were killed near the home camp, his feet and hands might be cut off and carried on sticks, like the scalps. During this dance the man who first

2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
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688 be held, runners were sent by the company of the vower and all were obliged to attend. If, in preparation for the Dance, the vower and the members of his company made a ruling, for example that a hunt was necessary, this would be announced. It would be stated that no one should go out alone to kill buffalo because they wanted everybody to kill some, and it was added: 'This is the order of the Wolves (or Stars). If anyone disobeys this rule, the Wolves (or Stars) will attend to them!' Should anyone have disobeyed the order, when they all returned from the hunt it would be announced: 'So-and-so disobeyed our rule.' The company of the vower would then go in a body to the delinquent's lodge, singing a special song.[24] The people would know that someone was going to be raided and all would go out to see who the culprit might have been." The delinquent knew that if he showed anger and resisted, he was in danger of being hurt or even killed. The company confiscated the culprit's meat, taking all of it that was there, and in addition would usually tear up his lodge. Should the delinquent have an enemy-friend among the "soldiers," that one took the lead in punishing and might even go so far as to cut the ears off of the delinquent's finest horse—a deep humiliation for its owner.

688 625 Thus during a Sacred Dance, from the time the vow was publicly announced until the Dance was over, the company of the vower was in complete authority and could apply sanctions of force if the various rulings were not obeyed. They actually constituted a police for the duration of the Dance. As soon as the Dance was over, however, the vower's company had no further power and the police function inherent in the soldier societies apparently remained in abeyance until some other Sacred Dance was performed.

688 625 224 There is some little question as to whether or not attendance of all bands was compulsory at the first spring hunt for buffalo and, if so, whether the Star and Wolf societies exercised their authority at this time. On one occasion in 1939, one informant, speaking in general terms, stated that the chief of the tribe had the possibility of calling on either the Stars or the Wolves to punish an offender who hunted alone after it had been announced that the buffalo had been sighted and all were to hunt together; and on another

[24] Song recorded as No. 103.

2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
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occasion he stated that it was the "law" of the spring hunt that no one should hunt buffalo alone or in a small group, violation of which invoked the sanctions applied by the Wolf-men or Stars. However, in 1940, this same informant stated twice, explicitly, that there was no police power except at the Sacred Dances and on a third occasion in that year said: "After the Sacred Dance the company disbanded, and the chief resumed control, but he did not punish anybody for hunting buffalo alone."

In any case, authority was delegated to the companies only temporarily. Otherwise there was no agency beyond that of the family which could apply sanctions of force, and then, on only two counts. A husband had the right to take the life of an unfaithful wife; the family had the right of blood revenge in case of murder. In both, however, less extreme modes of behavior were approved and bloodshed could honorably be avoided.

When murder occurred, if the family of the murdered person could be persuaded to accept a payment of goods as restitution, further spilling of blood was prevented. It was said that the lodge of the band chief offered temporary refuge to a murderer and that sanctuary was likewise available in the lodge of the Keeper either of the Flat or of the Feathered Pipe. It was thought that if the murderer and his family, who collectively shared responsibility for the crime, could flee the scene, time would be gained for negotiating the blood-price. If one blood relative killed another, there was no retaliation, but the murderer was shunned.

While there was a considerable amount of fighting and quarreling among the Gros Ventres, especially under the influence of liquor, disputes were usually settled without bloodshed. Outright murder, as distinct from deaths attributed to witchcraft, was seemingly relatively infrequent. The following seven cases, arranged chronologically, illustrate actual behavior. Each of these was referred to independently by several different informants with a high level of agreement among them on details. The total represents all the murders that were known to have occurred in the period from about 1850 to 1885.

Case No. 1. These events took place about 1847. Two young men, who were related by blood, went on foot to steal horses from the enemy. One had obtained a fine horse, but the other had been

2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
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CHAPTER III

NECESSITIES OF LIFE

The dominant technique by which the Gros Ventres met their needs was that of hunting, especially of the buffalo. The yearly round of productive activities was geared to the quest of that animal, with hunting of other animals, collecting, and the processing of raw materials subordinated thereto.

The Seasonal Round

The Gros Ventres state that buffalo were plentiful in their territory, at least in the area claimed from the 1830's on. This is borne out by studies of the habits and migrations of the buffalo in the northern plains.[1] In the exploitation of this abundant resource there were two regular peaks of intensive hunting—a concerted effort on the part of the tribe as a whole—in the spring and in the fall. During the summer the amount of hunting was fairly consistent, being stepped up occasionally in view of any Sacred Dances which might have been vowed. During the dead of winter the hunting of buffalo was said to have been only sporadic and not on so large a scale.

Some time in April the whole tribe foregathered to organize the first spring hunt which lasted about a month. This coincided with the northward migration of the buffalo which had wintered on the Montana ranges. The smaller herds formed in great masses as they sought their summer pastures on the plains of the Saskatchewan, where they again scattered into smaller herds. During this time the whole Gros Ventre tribe camped together and the hunters worked out from the camp as often as necessary, there being plenty of game within easy distance as the millions of buffalo passed a given spot. Apparently after this big hunt was over, the spring Pipe Rite was held and then everyone was free to move where he pleased. Usually the main body of the tribe stayed fairly

[1] Hornaday, pp. 388–89, 425.

2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
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well together during the ensuing summer months, a band or two moving off by themselves to rejoin the tribe in time to prepare for whatever Sacred Dances might have been scheduled, and parties of 10, 20, 30 or more men would go off to raid the enemy. Precautions had to be taken, too, against the ever-present danger of being raided by the enemy, especially by smaller groups separated from the main tribe as they went further and further from the center of their territory in quest of game.[8]

The hides of buffalo killed during the spring and summer were used to make parfleshes, moccasin soles, lodge covers, ropes and the like. Fresh meat was usually plentiful although it was necessary to move six or eight times a summer to keep up with the buffalo, some smaller herds of which apparently remained in Montana in spite of the migration of the vast majority to the north. Meantime as the various berries, wild fruits and wild roots ripened, collecting was done whenever opportunity offered, neither tribal nor band movements being determined, so far as we are aware, by that objective, but depending almost entirely on the whereabouts of the buffalo. During August and September, the rutting season, the buffalo joined in great milling masses leaving bare the surrounding range for many miles. The buffalo then separated into smaller herds again and by October, when the Gros Ventres started their concerted fall hunt, the buffalo were in prime condition, their coats sleek and fine.

The best time for robe hunting was approximately from October 15 to November 15, but the hunt continued until all had sufficient meat dried and stored to see them through the winter. It was said that as many robes as possible were dressed with the fur on, and

[8] In this connection it is interesting to note that the old Cree, quoted by Thompson, pp. 329–30, after describing a drawn battle between the Snake and Piegan about 1730 concludes: ". . . night put an end to the battle without a scalp being taken on either side, and in those days such was the result, unless one party was more numerous than the other. The great mischief of war then, was as now [1786], by attacking and destroying small camps of 10–30 tents which are obliged to separate for hunting." Such was evidently still the case in the middle of the 19th century. Denig writes in 1854, pp. 548–50, that when the contending parties are nearly equal, little damage is done. The worst damage occurs, however, when 200 to 400 warriors surprise a camp of 20 to 30 lodges.

2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

meat was dried "in wholesale quantities." This was the time of year when lodge covers and furnishings were replaced where necessary, new lodge poles cut, paint gathered from the mountains, and everything was done to prepare for winter quarters.

The tribe then split into groups of several bands each to seek places along watercourses where they would be protected as much as possible from the rigors of the weather as well as from depredations by their enemies. Trapping of fur-bearing animals and hunting of deer, elk and antelope by individual methods, such as stalking with the gun as weapon, were done during this season, with only an occasional buffalo being killed. The Gros Ventres placed the greatest emphasis on ability to hunt and recognized their limitations in trapping as compared with the Cree. It was considered most important for a man to be a good shot, whether with bow and arrow or gun. Nevertheless some fur-bearing animals were trapped. For beaver they usually used the steel trap or, when that was not available, they broke the dam and grabbed the beaver. Often they would smoke out an animal like the kit-fox, for example, and then shoot it. They knew a deadfall [3] for the fox and wolf, whose pelts they never used themselves but traded with the whites, and there was one trapping song which was sung to give luck in that pursuit.[4] But all in all hunting of the buffalo and to a lesser extent of the elk, deer and antelope, was a major occupation, while other animals were sought for only sporadically.

Buffalo Hunting and the Horse

The general procedure in hunting buffalo was about as follows. First, scouts, sent out to locate the herd, reported its whereabouts. Then the group of hunters, varying in size according to whether the whole tribe or only a band or two were camped together, would depart from camp in order to reach the herd by dawn. The swift buffalo horses to be used in the actual chase were led unburdened so as to keep them fresh. When the herd was spotted, the hunters mounted their swiftest horses and, at a given signal, all dashed into the herd at once, each man then killing as many as he could

[3] Kroeber, 1908, p. 149, describes the deadfall, and mentions also snaring and other methods of hunting birds.

[4] The song was recorded as Nos. 89, 90, 91.

2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
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before the buffalo got out of range. Only one such run a day was made and, although all hunters had an equal opportunity, so to speak, since no one of them started before the others, the greatest chance of success lay with the man mounted on the fastest horse. Incidentally the gun never supplanted the bow and arrow as a weapon of the chase because, for a mounted hunter riding close to the game, the bow and arrow was just as effective and even easier to use than the gun which had to be reloaded and which was difficult to aim accurately when traveling at a fast pace. Succeeding generations of Gros Ventre boys were trained in archery right up to, and including, the time of the disappearance of the buffalo.

Our informants stated that while the surround was sometimes resorted to, the chase or run, as described above, was the method preferred by the Gros Ventres. The old-fashioned methods of impounding and driving over the cliff were seemingly abandoned by the Gros Ventres in the 1830's. It was stated that an old man, who died at the age of 98 in 1920, witnessed the last big impounding at the head of the Teton River when he was twelve years old.[5] Our oldest informant (b. 1854) knew of these methods only because her grandmother and other older people had told her stories of what they had witnessed. She put it as follows: "When my grandmother was a young woman, the Gros Ventres were very badly off. Only a person here and there would have a horse, and these horses were not the fast kind that can be used in hunting. In fact they did better by building a row of rocks to lead the buffalo into a big corral;[6] or else by having a man covered with a buffalo robe to act as decoy. This man would run forward toward a steep precipice and just at the edge would jump aside while the buffalo following him would go over. The animals which were not crippled in the fall would be shot with bow and arrow. Everybody had to use dogs to drag their stuff as the people moved around; and they cut the lodges in two so the load would not be too heavy for a dog to draw."

The possession of an adequate number of horses, then, seems

[5] Denig, p. 532, confirms this, holding that all the northern plains tribes, except the Assiniboine and Cree, are so well supplied with horses that they do not need to resort to the corral.

[6] Cf. Kroeber, 1908, pp. 148–49.

2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
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CHAPTER IV

ECONOMIC ASPECTS

Labor

In the production of economic goods the man supplied the great bulk of raw materials by means of hunting, doing relatively little collecting and processing. He was responsible, however, for the supply and care of the major means of production, the horse. The chief objects manufactured by him were bows, arrows, clubs, shields, and ceremonial equipment.[1] The woman, on the other hand, supplied only a small part of the raw materials, through collecting, but did most of the processing of raw materials and manufacturing.

Cooperation within the household was necessary for production, and the household was practically a self-sufficient unit with relatively little reliance on the cooperative work of others. In actuality there was quite a bit of mutual help, especially among relatives. There was, of course, a certain amount of dependence of the man on his fellows in hunting in the sense that men usually hunted buffalo in groups and, in view of the common welfare, an individual was restrained from selfishly hunting alone and scattering the herd on which his fellows were depending. Nevertheless the operation was a collective rather than a truly cooperative one because, once the chase started, each man was on his own and had the right of disposal over whatever game he killed. It was stated that in any given run the most a man could kill would be seven or eight buffalo and that almost inevitably some would get none. No one went home empty-handed, however, for the more fortunate

[1] Maximilian noted in 1833 that men make only arms and smoking equipment (p. 103), and that among the Gros Ventres were many war clubs "made of the long end of an elk's horn" and "daggers" of jaws and teeth of a bear (p. 75). For other details of materials and manufacture, see Kroeber, 1908, pp. 150–51. For illustration of a shield, see photograph, courtesy of Richard Pohrt, pl. 3.

2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

224 476 would share at least the meat, if not the hides, with the less fortunate, which latter would contribute by helping skin and butcher.

[431] Butchering was quite an art and was considered the man's work, although occasionally women accompanied the hunting party if there were a shortage of men, as was liable to be the case especially in winter. Should the party have crossed a river to hunt, the meat was prepared for transportation on a raft by being cut into large chunks, and each two chunks skewered and joined by a thong of sufficient length to hang on the poles forming the raft. The raft was built by crossing two long poles at one end, the other ends [396] free and forming an angle of about thirty degrees. Three or four shorter poles were placed crosswise and lashed firmly in place with rawhide. The paunch of the buffalo, after being washed out, was used as a container for the many leftover bits of meat and was tied to the middle of the lower rung of the raft. A whole beef could thus be loaded on such a raft and towed across by one horseman. When, as was more usually the case, the meat was to be [492] packed back to camp by horses, the butchering was done differently but in such a way that a whole buffalo could be packed on a single horse.[1] Sometimes in winter when a small party went out and [251] they could not pack all the meat back in one trip, the remainder was buried in the snow and called for the following day.

462 281 Once the proceeds of the hunt were turned over to the households of the individual hunters, it was the woman's task to cook the food for immediate consumption and to prepare the surplus for storage. Her most arduous and time-consuming task was the dressing of skins and the manufacture of these into finished articles of clothing, containers, lodge-covers, and so on. It was stated that skins in one stage of preparation or another were nearly always at hand.[2] "They didn't do things in a haphazard way because there was a certain time to do this and a certain time to do that." From the hides of buffalo killed during the spring and early summer, when the hair was not thick, they made the parfleshes and bags, soles for moccasins, rawhide ropes, and lodge-covers. In the fall, when the hide was furry, robes were made.

The older women informants described how, when they were

[1] Cf. Kroeber, 1908, p. 149.

[2] For some details on skin dressing, see Kroeber, 1908, p. 150.

2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
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"husbands": "Go out and hunt buffalo." The boys would go off and stay a little while and on their way back made noises like neighing horses. This would be a sign for the girls to come to meet them and make comments such as: "Oh, what a lot of meat you are bringing!" Then they would pretend to slice, cook, and eat this imaginary meat. Once in a while the children actually snared a gopher, the skin of which served very well in their play as a food sack.

[224]

In order to lend excitement to this kind of play, they might divide into two groups and one "tribe" would attack the other. When their "husbands" or loved ones were "killed," the girls mourned, crying just as they had observed grown-ups do, even going so far as to make marks on their legs with mud to represent cuts. A "corpse" would be prepared for "burial," as they had seen the dead wrapped, with the exception that in play they failed to wrap the head.

Sometimes girls would take the foreleg of a buffalo, for example, and wrap it up to serve as a "baby." After having gotten from the river a certain kind of reed to serve as their hair, when the baby "died" they cut off their "hair" as a sign of mourning.

Many women described the lodges they, as children, built which were large enough to play in. Garter Snake used a big yellow dog that belonged to her grandmother as a horse, and when her lodge moved she packed everything on a travois which the dog drew. When it was not convenient to have the lodges built large enough to actually accommodate the children inside, the formation of the camp circle was copied by making large leaves into the shape of tipis. Sticks then represented horses and other sticks attached thereto were travois. These little wooden horses might be fitted out like real ones, with miniature beaded horse blankets, and so on. Occasionally, too, a little boy might pretend he was a horse and drag the travois while being led by a girl as he held a line in his mouth. When this type of horse was out grazing, the owner would have a difficult time catching it.

[492]

Sometimes the girls pretended that they cut off their little fingers as a sacrifice, even holding sage to the "wound" as in real life. Coming Daylight and Garter Snake, both of whom as children were associated with one of the Sacred Pipes, mentioned that

3: Cooper E-5 (1938-1940) 1957
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776 beings as Little Spirit and ghosts, but not such major ones as the Supreme Being and Bha'a.

The following story, as told by The Boy, gives nearly all that ● 224 is known about Little Spirit, etcibətä:t (ètc,sä, it is little, bettètò, 776 spirit [Sifton]).

"Long ago, how far back I do not know, Little Spirit made himself the guardian spirit helper of a certain man, saying: 'Whenever there is going to be a famine, call me.' 'What are you?' the man asked, 'Where do you come from?' 'I am Little Spirit, I am from the western wind.' The man who had Little Spirit never called him except when game was scarce and there was danger of famine among the people. Then he would call Little Spirit who would tell them where game was. When this man was dying, he said to the people: 'Whenever you go out hunting, pray to Little Spirit to show you where game is and when you have killed game and gutted it, take a piece of the liver and some of the fat, put in on the west side of the game killed, and say: "Here, Little Spirit, is liver and fat for you." ' It was just that one man of long ago, no other, who had Little Spirit as a personal helper. When Little Spirit came, he came as a little whirlwind."[19]

Little Spirit was, in accordance with this man's instruction, ordinarily appealed to by the Gros Ventres for success in hunting particularly at times when game was hard to get, and the above-mentioned first fruits sacrifice of liver and fat made to him after game was killed. He was not appealed to on any other occasion.

776 At a number of places in and around Gros Ventres territory are [172] cliffs with incised pictographs on them made by a certain class of "false persons" called tciya:tsine:n "ghost men" or "little men." They were never seen but according to Singer were dwarfish, about 3 feet tall. The Gros Ventres distinguish clearly between such pictographs made by these beings on the one hand and on the other those made by Indians or else tracks of animals in flat rocks. The first are temporary, and change from time to time; the other two kinds are permanent. Gros Ventres have tried to get

[114] [19] He did not, however, come into the shaking tent as the ghost helper did. The statement by Cooper, 1940, based on 1939 field notes, was an error corrected 1940 in the field.

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powers, intended more for the positive advantage of the keeper or his people, were customarily acquired during or after the transfer rite.

In the transfer rite the new keeper was taught how to doctor, especially in cases of fits, spasms and cramps. The peppermint beverage, now used by everybody for these maladies, was formerly a monopoly of the Flat Pipe keeper in his curing practice. Other doctoring powers were also conferred on him and he could use the hair rope from the Flat Pipe bundle as a potent medicine to cure with, but we could obtain no details on these points.

The keeper would pray to have good dreams and might sleep on the Pipe bed for the same purpose. His dreams, when told, were important news for his fellows, as through them the future could be foretold.

The keeper was also given power to summon, call or "snare" from a distance, enemies or reluctant friends. The Boy gave two instances of the use of this power, both from the lips of his father, Lame Bull. When Lame Bull, on learning of his election as Flat Pipe keeper fled to the hills, the ex-keeper so summoned him, using the Flat Pipe itself in the rite. The nine Flat Pipe songs were sung and at the end of each, the ex-keeper holding the Pipe at arm's length in both hands with the stem pointed upward and outward, sang the Hair Rope song, then twisted the stem tip in a vertical near-circle first upward and outward and then inward and downward in a sort of beckoning motion as if drawing something toward him, then downward and finally lowered the bowl toward (or to?) the ground.

On a later occasion during Lame Bull's keepership, on a war expedition against the Piegan he learned in a dream where they were located and was told that five of them would be killed. The night before the attack on the Piegan, using a common pipe and the above calling rite, thrice performed, with the pipe stem pointed toward the distant Piegan camp, invisible at the time to the Gros Ventre party, and singing the Hair Rope song, he "called" five of the Piegan, who, separated from the main Piegan body, were killed by the Gros Ventres.

The keeper and co-keeper also were given power to use in hunting buffalo, but we were able to obtain no details on the rite. The

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one occasion for which we obtained the account of Lame Bull's resort to this power, it failed to work.

The keeper likewise received power to use in case his horse played out during a war raid. In the 1868 battle with the Piegan, Lame Bull's horse stepped into a hole and fell at a moment when he was surrounded by Piegan. Two young Gros Ventre warriors, sons-in-law of Lame Bull, came to him. His horse got up but could not run, and in fact fell again. One of the young warriors said to him: "I thought the Flat Pipe was everything. Why don't you save yourself. The Piegan will kill all three of us." Lame Bull, keeper at the time, took some peppermint from the small bag tied to his whip, put it in his mouth, sang a certain song, spat on his hands, stroked his whip handle three times with his palm, made motions three times as if striking his horse, and the third time actually struck the horse. At this, the horse came to life as if fresh and started running, and Lame Bull got home safely.

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Still another power conferred on the keeper was that of getting possession of a horse by obtaining a single hair thereof. Horses entered into the Feathered Pipe complex, not into the Flat Pipe one. But the Flat Pipe keeper could not be refused a request for a horse or horses made by him of anyone. Moreover, even though he did not directly make such a request, if he wanted a certain good horse, he could ask one of his relatives or good friends, surreptitiously and preferably by night, to pluck one hair from the horse's tail and bring it to him. The keeper would then perform some rite (details not obtainable by us) over the hair and put the hair in the Flat Pipe bundle, and pretty soon he would acquire the desired horse. It may be added that when the keeper walked near or around anybody's horse, he was watched suspiciously for fear that unobserved he would pluck a hair from the horse's tail.

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In addition to these specific supernatural powers, the keeper and co-keeper were given a great number of ritual powers, the right and duty to carry out certain ceremonies directly or indirectly related to the Pipe and its keepership. These will be described later under "Ritual."

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In accordance with their sacred office and eminent dignity, with their role as benevolent intercessors for the people with the super-

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778 with the rites previously described. On a day's journey it may be noted, the bundle would have been placed on the tripod in the open three times: before starting out, about half-way, and on arrival at the new camp.

782 The killing of a pure white buffalo, a pure albino,—always a cow never a bull, according to Gros Ventre tradition,—was an extremely
● [224] rare occurrence. The killer could keep it himself, give it to the Flat Pipe keeper, or offer it as a sacrifice. This sacrificial rite was last held when the Boy's father, Lame Bull was a young man, probably in the 1850's, and served as a calendrical date: "at the time the white buffalo skin was offered as a sacrifice." The Boy, our sole informant on this rite, could give only fragmentary data on it, gotten from his father who had witnessed only that one time in his life.

If the killer chose to offer the albino skin as a sacrifice, he had to vow, and then had formally to notify the keeper of the Flat Pipe. Carrying it he went clockwise round the camp circle on the inside and brought it to the keeper's lodge. The keeper painted
[302] the man's face with charcoal paint (not red), the ritual color for sacrifices, with a circular band around his face, on the forehead, the sides of the cheeks near the ears, and under the jawbones and chin, and with also a star on the bridge of his nose. The circle, Lame Bull told the Boy, represented the sundog; the star, the sun. A procession in which the keeper, co-keeper, Pipe child, ex-keepers, ex-co-keepers, the two attendants, and all the people took part started at the keeper's lodge and marched clockwise all around the camp circle, very slowly, with three stops (probably at the west, east and south) for prayer, till they reached the sweat-lodge near the keeper's lodge. The albino skin was given a touch of charcoal paint, as in other sacrifices, but The Boy did not know other details of the special rite used in preparing the skin, nor did he know who carried it in the procession. On arrival of the procession at the sweat lodge, the main body of the people went away, but the small group who were to sweat remained and went through the whole sweat-lodge rite at which the albino skin was hung up on the sweat-lodge pole and after which, in accord-

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*796 782 be on the night immediately preceding the beginning of the Dance rite proper.

[785] Usually others besides the principal vower would vow to join the dance and to pierce their breasts with skewers. These associate vowers would also choose each his own grandfather and, with the help of his own crier, have the same formal public announcement made of his vow as in the case of the principal vower.

As proximate preparation for the Dance, if the bands were scattered at the time, the principal vower would send out young men as runners to summon the bands to foregather for the dance. Attendance was obligatory for all.

The principal vower set up his lodge in the center of the camp circle, and here headquarters were established where conferences of the vower and his assistants were held and whence pro tem laws and regulations, decisions when and whether to move camp, and so forth, were issued.

The vower's chief assistants in these matters were his own age-group or company, a component sub-group of either the Wolves or the Stars. Whether all the Wolves or Stars respectively, and not merely the vower's own age-group, were divided into "talls" and "shorts" (see below), and served as soldiers or "police" during the dance, to enforce attendance, order in the buffalo hunt and so forth, is a point we could not clear up, but more probably only the members of his own age-group.

[561 701] For either the vower's age-group, or perhaps, as just noted, all the Stars or Wolves respectively of which his age-group was a component sub-group, four head officers or "generals" or "lieutenants" were chosen, and also two subordinate officers or "servants" or attendants. The two tallest of the four head officers took the taller men of the age-group (or of the larger society, Stars or Wolves) as their soldiers, and one of the two subordinate officers; the two shortest, the shorter men, and the other subordinate officer. The two divisions, the "talls" and the "shorts," constituted the "soldiers" or "police" for the dance. Each division also had an outstanding old man as herald or crier.

[224] After the people had all been gathered together, the first task was that of gathering food supplies, buffalo meat and particularly

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buffalo tongues, for the celebration. The vower and his assistants would through their crier announce to the people whether the camp would move for good hunting. On the march, the vower and his company took their place in line immediately after the sacred Pipes. No one was allowed to hunt or run the buffalo until the signal was given.

During the hunt there would be foot and horse races, shooting contests and gambling matches between the "talls" and "shorts." The losers in the gambling would have to "cook," that is, to provide a meal for the winners, a feast at which the rest of the people, including the children, would horn in. Each one of the losers had to furnish some food or clothing and a smoke (not the pipe itself) to the winners. If one of the losers failed to bring a filled pipe along with the food or clothing wager, the wager was rejected, but he was given a chance to go get one. The winners kept track of the losers, and if any of the latter failed to pay up, they would not do anything to him at once while they were sitting around eating. But afterwards, the winners, followed by the rest of the people, would go to the lodge of the delinquent loser, who usually did not and dared not run away. Here the enemy-friend of the loser would take the latter out of his lodge, and lay him on a spread robe or blanket. The winners would then carry him to the stream or river, give him a good swing and throw him into the water. All the people would follow to see the fun, and the young boys would pelt him with buffalo chips. The victim had to take it all good naturedly and not lose his temper, and the crowd had a good laugh. If the loser were not in his lodge when the winners arrived, they would fetch water, and his enemy-friend would give the loser's bed a good drenching.

The hunt continued, the group moving here and there, until enough tongues and other meat was collected, the tongues having been turned over to the vower to be jerked by his wife or wives. Then came the earlier-mentioned four whole nights of singing, done either on successive nights, or from time to time as the tribe moved toward the spot selected for the Sacrifice Dance. After arrival there the fourth of the four all-night singings took place, marking the first night or beginning of the Dance proper, which

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is far from complete. It does, however, help to fill out some details of the picture given by Kroeber.[83]

According to The Boy the Dance and the following one, the Old Women's Dance, were originally gifts from the buffalo. But the circumstances under which they were given were unknown even to the old men living in The Boy's lifetime. These two Dances were closely associated with the buffalo. In both, the dancers impersonated buffalo, and the performance of both Dances was efficacious in bringing buffalo for the hunters to kill.

The Old Men's Dance, like the other Sacred Dances, was held only in the summer time, and only in fulfillment of a vow. The Boy was of the opinion that it lasted only one day.[84]

To be eligible to vow or to join the Law Enforcer's Dance, a man had to be well advanced in age, presumably having gone through the other Lodges, at least the Fly, Crazy, Kit-fox and Dog. The Drum Dance was dropped out of the series at the beginning of the nineteenth century, as noted above, and the Sacrifice Dance was regarded as outside of the series. While the participants were older men, somewhat beyond the prime of life, "they were still active and could get around." Since they would still be eligible to vow and carry out the Sacrifice Dance they had not yet completed their society and dance career. So far as we could gather, their age range was seemingly from about the late forties or early fifties to the early or middle sixties.

Those who went through the Dance with the vower thereof were, according to The Boy, the men of about the same age-group who had gone through the other sacred Dances together,—seemingly therefore those who had been members of the same age-group of the Star or Wolves. Such a fellow member, who when invited by the others refused to join, was "punished."

The ritual grandfathers of the chief vower and of his associates were chosen from the ranks of the "retired old men" who had already gone through the Dance. According to The Boy, the chief vower's grandfather had to be a man who had himself previously gone through it as chief vower.

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[83] Kroeber, 1908, pp. 258-59.

[84] It was a four day rite according to information given to Kroeber, 1908, p. 259.

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Two young men attendants were chosen, but there was no police force, according to The Boy who said none was needed in the case of these "harmless" and "venerable" old men dancers. In general, The Boy had the impression that people had not cared much what these old men did in their Dance and did not go to it much, for it had "no color to it, nothing lively about it."

The dance lodge,—a "very simple little hut" according to The Boy and Thick; a "big round camp" according to Coming Daylight,—was put up outside the camp circle, toward the south thereof. The dancers carried out their rites "sort of secretly." They could be heard singing and dancing inside their lodge, but they did not go around much in public view afterwards as the women did in their Dance. The rattles used to accompany the singing were sticks about a foot or foot-and-a-half long with big buffalo calf hoofs on one end, and were very noisy. The leader's stick was larger and its butt end was pounded on the ground to keep time.

Two of the Dance songs, numbers 67 and 68, were recorded as sung by The Boy. Number 68 was sung while the old men were dancing and contains their particular yell.

The other song, number 67, has the words meaning: "You first (or leading) (buffalo) bull, come in this direction (come streaming in)." This song was a "half-prayer." The singers while singing it were wishing as hard as they could, so there would be plenty of buffalo and thus the people would not have to go far to hunt successfully. The very first original buffalo procreated other buffalo and singers wanted him to lead the other buffalo, his progeny, to the Gros Ventres. The wish-thought or "half-prayer" was directed, however, according to The Boy, not to the first buffalo, but to the Supreme Being so that the latter would provide buffalo.

The primary purpose of the Dance was pretty clearly that of bringing success in buffalo hunting. After the dance was over, the camp would move to another site, and then the people "would always run into a lot of buffalo and have good hunting luck." "Even if there were no buffalo nearby when this Dance had been going on, in some mysterious way many buffalo would come and even run around in the camp." Right after the very last time the Dance was performed, the people ran into a great many buffalo.

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782 [511] praying and singing were done at other seasons of the year and how far as a more general custom by other fathers of families were points we did not clear up.

[264] Before eating food, at least in any more or less formal gathering, a portion of the food was offered up with prayer.

[224] Prayer rites and observances for good hunting were few and simple—as compared, for example, with the numerous and complicated ones practiced by the Algonquian-speaking tribes of the taiga. Abundance of food, which principally meant game food, was commonly prayed for. Two of the Sacred Dances, the Law Enforcers' and the Woman's, had as a purpose success in buffalo hunting. But beyond this, hunting entered little into ritual, and we may recall hunting was conspicuously absent from the power quest. We recorded no rites or observances whatever in connection with the gathering of berries, roots or other plant food.

[484] It was customary on crossing rivers to pray to the Last Child for protection, and to throw into the water offerings, especially shells and eagle-tail feathers, for the Last Child, or the water monster, or both, with some words such as, "I give you this." Sometimes, too, some prayer and offering would be made by a person going to swim, or on other occasions of water hazard.

During or just before severe thunderstorms, various prayer and other procedures were resorted to, many of them directed to Bha'a, the storm being.

Seeking indirectly or asking directly the prayers of the aged, especially for long life, took several different forms, and played an important role in Gros Ventre life, as we have explained elsewhere.

There were many different ways of seeking the prayers of the aged. We recorded the following, which may or may not exhaust the list: crying before a lodge, offering a pipe, promising a sweat-lodge, "holy boiling," providing a feast, doing favors of various kinds.

782 888 "Holy boiling," to which we have not as yet referred, was an observance distinct both from the preceding ones and from feasting a group of aged people. It was intended primarily for some one person, man or woman, although others partook of the meal, and